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New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 10 and 101 (*continued*)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its second session (A/63/92)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218 and A/63/218/Corr.1)

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for your initiative in convening this joint debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund. We would also like to express our recognition of Ambassador Takasu for his commendable leadership as Chairman of our Commission. Furthermore, El Salvador adds its support to the ideas expressed in his statement. We would also like to thank the Ambassadors of Norway, the Netherlands, Brazil and Belgium for the manner in which they are conducting their work on the various countries under consideration.

The Peacebuilding Commission was established with the purpose of creating a new peacebuilding architecture within the United Nations system aimed at helping countries emerging from conflict and moving from war to a process of development. This vision was shaped by the Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit. Since then, El Salvador has made this vision its own, and we are thankful for the honour of having served as Vice-Chair of the Commission. By serving in the Commission, we are repaying the international community for the assistance we have received in difficult times.

We have endeavoured to share our own experiences of the peacebuilding process by imparting a comprehensive vision of the process itself. We have also endeavoured to provide information as requested regarding our experience in specific areas in which we passed through progressive successful stages, such as the demobilization and reintegration of armed forces. We have been able to share those experiences with Guinea-Bissau, in particular, by advising that country on its national civilian police.

El Salvador will remain committed to dialogue with the various actors involved on the ground in the countries on the Commission's agenda. Sharing experiences also contributes to the prevention of the resurgence of violence by involving the various actors in this process and joining efforts with regional organizations as well as friendly countries, without neglecting efforts to implement strategies oriented towards attaining genuinely sustainable development.

The Commission and the membership in general have been strengthened by the work carried out by the Working Group on Lessons Learned, over which El Salvador is greatly honoured to preside. The Working Group has considered a broad range of

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questions: elections and risk reduction in post-conflict situations; local governance and decentralization; transitional justice; the situation of internally displaced persons in peacebuilding contexts; enhancing the economic capabilities of States by providing support to national budgets; and issues involving the environment, conflict and peacebuilding. The Working Group has also dealt with cross-cutting issues that we consider fundamental to the peacebuilding process, including gender in peacebuilding, by strengthening the participation of women, and the importance of regional approaches in these processes. For my country, it is fundamental to ensure that the work of this group be strengthened in the future, bearing in mind that opportunities for dialogue and exchanging experiences and best practices enable us to give full consideration to the various factors affecting peacebuilding in post-conflict countries. In fact, that constitutes important value added to the work carried out by the other configurations of the Commission. For El Salvador, strengthening our Commission's relationship with the General Assembly and with the Economic and Social Council is of great importance.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund, we are pleased to see that pledges have surpassed the expected goal of $200 million. We agree with other delegations in advocating for greater coordination between the Peacebuilding Fund and Commission and for greater transparency and accountability. We also hope that, in the future, the Peacebuilding Fund will be of benefit to national or regional projects that can effect real change on the ground and strengthen peacebuilding efforts. The fact that there is no armed violence in a specific context or region should not exclude the possibility of transferring resources to the key sectors of peace, security and development.

El Salvador is conscious of the importance of the equitable participation of different regional groups in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as, unfortunately, conflicts are not the exclusive preserve of any specific society; rather, they are the outcome of a number of factors, both internal and international, which combine to evoke violent responses to the unfulfilled demands of various political and social groups. From that standpoint, the more that the international community works together to embrace the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the more opportunity there will be for political dialogue and to share experiences among post-conflict countries and between them and United Nations organs and to make considerable contributions to support communities in conflict in their attempts to peacefully overcome their differences by means of dialogue and negotiations based upon a new national understanding.

In view of the above, El Salvador calls upon regional groups to consider from the standpoint of inclusion and equitable participation the best possible options to break out of the current deadlock and to define, in good faith, the composition of the Peacebuilding Commission beginning in January 2009.

Before concluding, allow me to make a brief comment on the Peacebuilding Fund. We believe that what the Fund has succeeded in doing is praiseworthy. However, we also hope that the Fund will benefit both national and regional projects which deserve consideration. Once again, we are fully committed to continue to support the Commission and countries under consideration and to share our experiences with them.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As we express our gratitude to Ambassador Takasu for his work, we would like at the outset to stress the importance of the documents that have been submitted: the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92) and the report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218).

In the last two years we have witnessed the strengthening of the new institutions that were created at the 2005 Summit of heads of State and Government and in the specific case at hand — the Peacebuilding Commission — we can say that the new body has responded in a competent and flexible way by confronting the challenges of the various cases it handles, as well as extending the scope of its programme to an increased number of countries.

From that viewpoint, we wish to stress the extension of the programme to the Central African Republic and the requests submitted by other countries, which clearly indicate an increase in recognition and trust for the work of the Commission. The development of integration strategies to deal with specific circumstances has made it possible to improve political dialogue, to achieve coordination between national and international bodies and to improve the mustering of resources.

Likewise, we must stress the growth and appropriate use of the Peacebuilding Fund and its

simplified implementation mechanism, as well as its being open to specific projects that can be carried out in advance of the acceptance of countries by the Commission. Those positive circumstances are extremely important, since the international community notes with deep concern two trends that have been strengthened in recent years.

On the one hand, we observe that a large number of countries that are emerging from conflict are lacking basic State institutions and thus require emergency humanitarian assistance. On the other hand and just as worrisome, is the fact that a large number of countries have in the immediate present succeeded in emerging from situations of war and violence however, they very quickly relapse to the same situation, and we know full well the outcome: the resumption of hostilities, the unleashing of violence against civilians, economic and social chaos and destruction of the State.

Peacekeeping is necessary, but it is not sufficient. The efforts made by this Organization and its Member States can best bear fruit only if — through coordination and international cooperation — we help the lawful authorities of those nations to build civil society — institutions, jurisprudence, citizenship — and political, social and economic factors that will make it possible for them to become fully integrated in the community of nations, bearing clearly in mind the particular characteristics and sovereign decisions of each and every country.

That is why the Peacebuilding Commission represents for Uruguay the direct answer to the need for an institutional mechanism within the United Nations system that responds to the special needs of countries emerging from conflict.

Our country is firmly committed to strengthening international peace and security and its peacebuilding efforts can be seen by Uruguay's significant contribution of troops to peacekeeping operations — which is the largest per capita contribution in the world. Since its first participation in peacekeeping until the present, Uruguay has garnered a wealth of experience in the reconstruction and peacebuilding of areas devastated by conflict and has spared no effort to put an end to hostilities, so that communities can achieve peace and national reconciliation.

Uruguayan teams have provided major electoral assistance to States during elections and have also helped to protect the populations in countries where there is violence. But we note with sadness that this valuable experience, as well as that of many other Latin American countries, has not been fully put to use to serve the international community, through the new institution.

In that connection, we cannot fail to once again express our profound concern at the lack of proper representation of Latin American and Caribbean countries on the Peacebuilding Commission, whose composition should reflect the participation of countries in peacekeeping missions and the experience they have acquired in peacebuilding, as well as an equitable geographical representation in order to ensure consideration of recommendations that represent the various viewpoints of the large number of actors involved in peacebuilding in the aftermath of a conflict.

Uruguay, which was the very first country to submit its candidacy among the Latin American group for the elections that will be held in December 2008, reiterates its commitment to United Nations peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding throughout the world and repeats its call to become part of the Commission. We will be involved in the Commission in the spirit of providing our experience and our desire to work and cooperate, which we believe to be in accordance with the multilateral mindset that our country has demonstrated throughout its history within the Organization.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): Today's debate is important and I wish to thank you, Sir, for organizing it. It represents an opportunity to share our views on the Peacebuilding Commission as well as the Peacebuilding Fund, two years after both became operational. At the outset, let me say that I align myself with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

The Peacebuilding Commission has invested considerable time and effort over the past two years in implementing its mandate through the development of the appropriate strategic approaches and implementation mechanisms. The result has been the conclusion of Peacebuilding Cooperation Frameworks for three countries on its agenda — Burundi, Sierra Leone and, recently, Guinea-Bissau — based on an extensive mapping of peacebuilding gaps in those countries. Those efforts, which the Commission has had to undertake while operating in largely uncharted

waters, have involved the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, ranging from the Governments of the countries concerned to the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the various stakeholders on the ground.

While those are in themselves important achievements from which the Peacebuilding Commission should draw confidence, they are only a stepping stone towards the ultimate goal of the Commission. That goal is and must remain to make a positive difference in the countries on its agenda by ensuring that the identified peacebuilding gaps are effectively addressed. That is, as has been reiterated many times before, the most effective way to prevent a relapse into conflict in countries that have been struggling to strengthen their stability and democracy since their conflict ended. This is therefore where the valued added of the Peacebuilding Commission ultimately lies and is the basis on which the Peacebuilding Commission should be assessed. Taking it as our yardstick, we can fairly say that, while we recognize the considerable achievements made by both the Governments of the countries on its agenda and by the Peacebuilding Commission itself, we are not there yet.

What is needed at this point in time — and this should guide the Peacebuilding Commission's activities in the coming months — is concrete support from existing and new donors alike to address the peacebuilding gaps that have been identified in the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda.

We have done the strategic work so far for Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. We have committed to ensuring that the identified gaps will be addressed. It is now time to translate our commitments into concrete engagements. It is only when new resources and other forms of support have been generated that we can confidently say that the Peacebuilding Commission is living up to the high expectations that surrounded its creation in 2005.

It is only right that we should be regularly reviewing the way the Peacebuilding Commission has been operating, and good suggestions for its improvement have been made. Similarly, it is appropriate that we consider how the functioning of the Peacebuilding Fund can be further streamlined. In that regard, the ongoing evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services will certainly give us helpful insights into how its operation might be improved.

The Peacebuilding Support Office, under the energetic new leadership of Assistant Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute, will be crucial in providing support for the tasks at hand, as it has done in the past. It is the Peacebuilding Commission's membership that must and will be most instrumental in achieving the goals that we have set out to achieve.

I draw confidence from the many statements that we have heard since the beginning of this debate last week. There is unwavering support for the Peacebuilding Commission's original mandate and a consensus that the Peacebuilding Commission is on the right track. We are all anxious to see the Peacebuilding Commission succeed, which in practice means that the countries on its agenda succeed. However, the Commission's success, unfortunately, is not determined by our vocal support or our endorsement of its mandate; it is determined by our readiness to make a contribution in the country concerned. When the time comes to thoroughly evaluate the Peacebuilding Commission in light of its original mandate — and that time will come — we must be confident that every effort was made to make it work. The time to make the Peacebuilding Commission work is now.

We have before us sufficient strategic documents to determine where our support is needed most. Let us not waver; let us offer whatever expertise or funds we can muster to ensure that the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda are set on an irreversible track towards consolidated peace and stability.

Mr. Kim Bonghyun (Republic of Korea): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank the Peacebuilding Commission for its second annual report (A/63/92), as well as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/63/218). We also appreciate the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to organize this timely opportunity to debate the reports.

As is well reflected in the two reports before us, in the period of just over two years since it was formally established, the Peacebuilding Commission has carried out its mandates effectively and shown great potential to become a key organ in coordinating international peacebuilding activities. In particular, significant progress has been made in the

Commission's country-specific configurations, increasing the on-the-ground results of our peacebuilding efforts. I would like to attribute the Peacebuilding Commission's promising progress over the past two years to the active contribution of all members of the Commission, and in particular to Chairperson Ambassador Yukio Takasu, the Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission and the Chairpersons of the country-specific configurations.

My delegation also highly values the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office and appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General and Ms. Carolyn McAskie in laying the foundations for the Office. My delegation expects that the new leadership of Ms. Jane Holl Lute will guide the Office in further consolidating the foundations of peacebuilding operations with her noted professional experience in the area of peacekeeping operations.

The Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund were among the major outcomes of the 2005 World Summit and, with the establishment of the Commission and the Fund, synergies among the three pillars of the United Nations have certainly been strengthened. Moreover, international support and assistance to post-conflict countries are better systemized and integrated. The increasing number of subjects on the Commission's agenda indicates that the Commission is on track. My delegation is glad that the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission also shares our estimation of the second-year activities of the Commission. If the first year was a time for foundation and preparation, the second year truly marked the beginning of progress. To consolidate and maintain the momentum of progress into its third year, I believe it is high time to consider the challenges before us.

First, peacebuilding operations should be executed in a way that respects and further strengthens the national ownership and priorities of recipient countries. One of the ultimate goals of peacebuilding is to stabilize the post-conflict situation and establish a basis for long-term sustainable development. To that end, national ownership needs to be respected and incorporated from the first steps of the rebuilding stage after a conflict.

Secondly, to prevent post-conflict countries from relapsing into conflict situations, concrete results for the people on the ground should be visualized quickly. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the "three Qs": quick response, quick relief and quick impact. Among other things, health issues should be focused on when carrying out the three Qs because the results of the three Qs are most visible in those programmes concerned with issues of public health care. Moreover, those in post-conflict situations are in desperate need of public health care. Without public health-care issues being solved, no country will be able to move forward.

Thirdly, the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission need to be further enhanced to respond more promptly, more effectively and more strategically. To attain that goal, the Commission needs to place itself at the centre of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and ensure coherent and coordinated execution of United Nations peacebuilding activities.

Fourthly, the partnership among all stakeholders should be strengthened with the Peacebuilding Commission at its centre. Within the United Nations system, relations among the Commission, the Security Council and the General Assembly need to be further defined in a more strategic and coordinated manner. Outside the United Nations system, we need to make further efforts to establish strategic relations with the Bretton Woods institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Considering the increasing role of the private sector in the peacebuilding arena, we also need to continuously engage civil society organizations and other players in the private sector.

Fifthly, stable and predictable funding should be secured. It is inspiring that the Peacebuilding Fund has attracted more than $269 million in pledges, exceeding its $250 million funding target, according to the Secretary-General's report. However, the report also states that 80 per cent of the deposited funds came from only eight donors. Although it is a good sign that over 20 developing countries have made contributions to the Fund, in order to secure more stable and predictable funding we need to further broaden and diversify the donor base.

Sixthly, today we are faced with an unprecedented crisis, often referred to as multiple challenges — the food and energy crisis, development challenges and climate change. The current volatile financial situation further complicates the already staggering situation. Those challenges may negate the

accomplishments we have painstakingly achieved, not only in areas of development, but also in peacebuilding spheres. We need to be prepared to mitigate and minimize the effects of those grave challenges on our peacebuilding efforts.

Finally, the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and subsequent long-term sustainable development should be a seamless process. Carefully designed strategies and close cooperative relations with all stakeholders are necessary to minimize any gaps between each stage. We understand that the current strategic framework of each country-specific configuration has been carefully developed to that end.

Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Just half a century ago, the Republic of Korea was a country emerging from conflict. With the timely and efficient assistance of the international community and the United Nations, we were able to build peace and attain long-term development. From our own experience, we understand and value the importance of peacebuilding activities. Drawing from that background, Korea has already contributed $3 million to the Peacebuilding Fund and we look forward to joining and actively contributing to the Peacebuilding Commission next year. It will be a valuable opportunity for Korea to use our past experience to help repay the international community and facilitate post-conflict countries to rebuild and develop.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office are pillars of the new peacebuilding architecture created by the Millennium Summit. We are very happy that the Peacebuilding Commission in its second year of existence has demonstrated itself to be a vital part of United Nations reform and has proved its added value. During that period, a number of things were achieved. Two new countries — Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic — were placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission; the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework for Sierra Leone and the monitoring and tracking mechanism for Burundi were adopted; and the Strategic Peacebuilding Framework for Guinea-Bissau was recently finalized and formally approved.

The Peacebuilding Commission proved its added value in helping countries on its agenda during difficult periods. The Commission provided important assistance during the preparation of the democratic elections in Sierra Leone and continued its work in close cooperation with the new Government formed by the results of the elections. In Burundi, the Peacebuilding Commission provided assistance with issues negatively affecting the country's efforts to consolidate peace and representing potential crises, including a fragile budgetary situation and a parliamentary deadlock.

The Peacebuilding Commission further improved its role in marshalling resources. We highly appreciate the efforts of the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations to establish and further develop contacts with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other banking institutions. Significant efforts were devoted to outreach activities with the regional organizations and important donors.

An important role of the Peacebuilding Commission is to provide advice to the General Assembly and the Security Council. We welcome the initiative of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session to invite the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to brief the Assembly on the work of the Commission. The briefings to the Security Council by the Commission's Chair and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations have become a useful practice. Indeed, the Peacebuilding Commission, thanks to its innovative methods — including the use of modern technology such as video links organizing field missions of Commission delegations and in developing contacts with all stakeholders, including civil society, women and youth organizations — is able to provide updated information on the progress of peacebuilding efforts in the countries on its agenda.

We are of the opinion that one of the most important roles of the Peacebuilding Commission is to mobilize the entire United Nations system for peacebuilding efforts in the countries on its agenda. While a number of things have been accomplished, much more lies ahead. Peacebuilding is a complex effort based on social, economic and political

development. It consists of many interlinked tasks, from security sector reform, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law to sustainable economic and social development, including the development of educational and health systems. The more active involvement of the special United Nations agencies, such as UNESCO, the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization, to mention only some, is indispensable. The link with system-wide coherence reform is clear. Countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda could serve as a very good example of the realization of the goal of delivering as one.

The Czech Republic is a country that annually contributes to the Peacebuilding Fund, and our next contribution will be provided before the end of the year. As a Peacebuilding Fund donor country, we are pleased by the success of the Fund, manifested by its capability to attract pledges exceeding the initial target. Thirty-seven peacebuilding projects have already been approved and are in different stages of realization. The three windows mechanism has proved to be an appropriate tool for coping with different situations in different countries. We would like to see the Fund act as a catalyst to attract other donors to invest in the given countries. Based on the mapping exercise, the projects financed from the Peacebuilding Fund should also be used to cover gaps in peacebuilding activities.

In conclusion, I would like to stress how much the Czech Republic is honoured to be a member of the Peacebuilding Commission during this exciting period when the foundations of the Commission's future activities are laid down. I take this opportunity to reiterate our firm support for peacebuilding activities.

Mr. Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I have known Ambassador Yukio Takasu for a great many years now, and it is with a great deal of pleasure that, on behalf of my delegation, I extend to him our most heartfelt congratulations for the work he has carried out and for his outstanding presentation of the Peacebuilding Commission's report. The report highlights the important role played by the Commission in helping the countries concerned to recover from post-conflict situations and ensure that they do not plunge back into conflict.

My delegation's appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund. We are also grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Holl Lute, who is well-known for her energy, dynamism and pragmatism. We would like to thank the various donor States, whose generosity has enabled the Commission's work to be carried out in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. That ever-growing generosity has also allowed for the inclusion of other countries on the Commission's agenda.

The delegation of Cameroon would like to associate itself with the statement made by Ambassador Raymond Wolfe of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In its second year of existence, the Peacebuilding Commission has undertaken a certain number of activities, resulting in the determination of the priorities for the programme of work and action of the Organizational Committee. The cooperation between the Commission and the main United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, has ensured, given their theoretical and institutional expertise on various issues, concrete results in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

During the period under consideration, major areas of peacebuilding work were supported by more pragmatic methods of work and procedures, enabling the successful financing of the various training missions in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Outstanding progress has generally been achieved in that field, culminating in the adoption by the Commission, the respective Governments and various stakeholders of the conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of Strategic Peacebuilding Frameworks.

My delegation also welcomes the analysis carried out on the progress achieved and, in that respect supports the integrated strategy concepts for peacebuilding spelled out in the report, inter alia concerning the effectiveness of all peacebuilding activities and the mobilization of the resources necessary for those activities.

Cameroon, as a troop-contributing country supporting United Nations peacekeeping efforts, reiterates its readiness to cooperate in promoting the Commission's work. To that end, my delegation reiterates the hope expressed in the report of seeing Member States reach a consensus on the allocation of

seats by regional group during the election of the members of the Organizational Committee.

The Peacebuilding Commission and its Fund are two recent United Nations initiatives. With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund in particular, the Secretary-General's report maintains that, in its second year of existence, the Fund has become a unique strategic instrument, capable of taking the necessary risks and playing the role of catalyst in supporting peacebuilding in States emerging from conflict. My delegation, along with many other previous speakers, supports that farsighted vision.

However, the multitude of players, in particular in the cooperation between the Peacebuilding Fund and various partners and other funds, gives rise to genuine concern, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. In that connection, the report concludes that, with regard to the future direction of the Fund and its methods of work,

> "The concept of peacebuilding is not well understood by all actors (...) The Fund's terms of reference should clearly define and publicize the scope of early peacebuilding activities to ensure that the Fund focuses on delivering strategic, value-added results" (*A/63/218, para. 54*).

In that context, and especially with regard to the mistakes of the past in the management of certain other funds, my delegation advocates transparent management of the Fund's resources. We endorse the principle of carrying out ongoing assessments of the criteria and directives currently being used, on the basis of achieving an appropriate balance between experience in the field and the financing of projects.

Finally, we support the guidelines suggested for improving the Fund's intervention mechanisms, in particular through the simplification of project implementation procedures. That will allow us, in the long term, to ensure effective action and to avoid the delays noted during the reporting period in Sierra Leone and Burundi.

For my delegation, the main objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission and its Fund are to prescribe a useful and effective course of treatment to rapidly heal the traumatic post-conflict wounds and contribute at the same time to a full recovery from them. Close coordination must therefore take place between the various actors and partners in the field of development, to enable each of them to play their rightful role, under the supervision of government and national authorities, in the full range of actions undertaken.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): This consideration of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund, provides us with an opportunity to consider the very real progress achieved since the first report, which we reviewed last year.

Indeed, it is an opportunity for us to welcome the considerable progress made in implementing the decision emanating from the 2005 World Summit, held here. The major objective of the Summit was to ensure that, working together, we could create a mechanism that could make a difference. That is precisely what we are witnessing. The Peacebuilding Commission has turned out to be an extraordinary mechanism, a mechanism that is at the disposal of the people, who need it in order to, together with the international community, build peace and create the conditions for sustainable development.

I would like, at the outset, to wholeheartedly thank the Chairperson of the Commission, our colleague from Japan, Ambassador Takasu. In his work in the Commission, Ambassador Takasu has contributed not only his own personal experience, but also the commitment of his country, Japan, which is a close friend of Africa. His country is a friend to a continent that needs support and help in its efforts to restore peace where it is threatened and to reconcile the parties to conflict wherever it arises, but also to create the conditions necessary for true development, because that is the end goal and the objective that we have set for ourselves. I would also like to express to him and to the Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission our full appreciation for their joint efforts, for having in the past year worked with dedication, devotion and perseverance in the cause of the international community, in particular the cause of the neediest countries, including my own, Guinea-Bissau.

I would like to state that we have been very impressed by the work that has been done by the excellent team under the leadership of Ms. Carolyn McAskie, who left this past summer. She had headed up the Peacebuilding Support Office. She was an excellent leader, with the support of an extremely competent team. I would like to pay tribute to her here

and now, while stating, on behalf of my delegation, how pleased I am that the Secretary-General has chosen such a competent, committed and — in the words of my colleague, the representative of Cameroon — pragmatic woman to replace her as Ms. Jane Holl Lute. We are convinced that, working together, we can continue the work we have begun and ensure that this extraordinary mechanism can provide what is expected of it, namely that we can work together to build peace wherever we need such an effort to be made.

The Peacebuilding Commission, as can be seen from the report introduced by its Chairperson (A/63/92), has, as I stated, proved to be an impressive mechanism, first of all because of its innovative character. We have been able to see, through it, that, working together, we can do a great deal — and do a great deal better. Working together means including all the stakeholders, all those who are able to make a contribution, such as civil society in the countries concerned, but especially development partners and, even better, the Bretton Woods institutions, which have proven to be not only important but truly committed partners. They too have been willing to innovate.

It is indeed a matter of innovation to leave the beaten path, to ensure that that mechanism, which was willed into being and established by our heads of State and is the expression of a hope expressed by all of us here in the General Assembly, is truly something new and is able to work in a different way. It should be able to ensure that the hopes that often arise from the decisions taken by everyone here and by the various committees at the United Nations, not only are an expression of the solidarity we owe to the people who need our help, but also ensure that those decisions are followed by action.

Very often, the criticism — which is a fair one, in my delegation's view — levelled against the United Nations system as a whole is that we discuss a great deal and we take many decisions, but those decisions are very often not followed by action. That is where the Peacebuilding Commission is fundamentally different. It eloquently demonstrates that when we innovate, when we are determined and when we combine our efforts, our knowledge and, in particular, the support that can be provided by countries able to offer it, assistance can be given to the countries in question. That assistance should not be only in the form of financial support. More than that, we need to be encouraged to proceed democratically within our countries, to elect our leaders democratically, to promote dialogue and cooperation, to promote the rule of law and to ensure that, through inclusive and participatory democracy, all the sons and daughters of our countries can be called upon to manage their own country. That is the key problem, and very often, that is the source of conflict, particularly in Africa: hegemony and lack of inclusion.

I would therefore like to state that, thanks to this partnership that we have been able to establish between the Peacebuilding Commission, the countries on its agenda — which are represented by their authorities but also by civil society organizations, women, young people and political parties — and the Bretton Woods institutions, we have been able to establish a true partnership that truly works. The outcome of that partnership is real, tangible and irrefutable, as highlighted in the report presented by the Commission's very able Chairperson, the Permanent Representative of Japan.

As regards Guinea-Bissau, which since December 2004 has been on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are extremely satisfied. We are satisfied because the Commission has provided a link within our own society to ensure that the key foundation of democracy is respected. That foundation is inclusion, which breathes fresh life into the democratic process and gives new meaning to the idea of inclusive democracy.

We have been able to work with the Commission to ensure that all those concerned about the future of Guinea-Bissau can take part in the management of the country. The country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau is headed by Ambassador Viotti, our colleague from Brazil, and its team visited Guinea-Bissau this past April. Along with my own compatriots — and when I say compatriots, I include everybody, as I stated earlier, not only Government representatives but also civil society, women, young people and political parties, in other words, all of the stakeholders — it has been able to bring about agreement, through constructive dialogue, on the strategy that was just adopted at the beginning of this month.

The strategy is the outcome of an effort that included everyone, and it reflects the participation of each and every stakeholder. It is thanks to that new,

participative approach that we have been able to establish the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau, which will be the engine for achieving peacebuilding in our country.

We highly appreciate the support that has been provided to us, not only by all the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the members of the country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau, but also all of our development partners, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions. I hope that, very soon, we will be able to implement the comprehensive Strategic Framework, which will allow Guinea-Bissau to take an important step forward in our peacebuilding efforts. We do know that the Peacebuilding Commission is not a development agency. The Commission will help us to lay the foundations that are needed to consolidate democracy and ensure proper development for our country.

As Ambassador Kim Bonghyun, the representative of the Republic of Korea, reminded us a moment ago, 50 years ago, the Republic of Korea had just emerged from conflict. That is a very clear example that should encourage us and show us clearly that conflicts are not inevitable. We can emerge from conflict if we are resolved to ensure that national reconciliation and peace can take hold in our countries and that, together, all citizens can combine their efforts and energies to work together and leave underdevelopment behind. Underdevelopment is not inevitable, and the Republic of Korea is the clearest proof of that.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund, we are indebted to all the countries that have contributed to the Fund. We have, of course, surpassed the established targets, but that is not enough, of course, in the light of everything that is expected from the Fund. We should therefore not be too self-satisfied. While thanking each and every person who has contributed — and they are many — we should encourage them to persevere and contribute more. We should also encourage those who have not yet done so to contribute to the Fund. Believe me, that is a real and very profitable investment. To invest in peacebuilding is an investment in the future of international peace. I think we must continue to say that those who have contributed to the Fund have made the right choice, and on behalf of my country, I thank them.

In conclusion, allow me to say that all those who have contributed so far to the Fund are making a difference in countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Guinea, Haiti and, more recently, Kenya. Here again, we are indebted to them for their solidarity.

Finally, we must continue to work together so that the Peacebuilding Commission may truly be a great mechanism, as I mentioned earlier, a mechanism that will make a difference and show that a reformed United Nations, when we the Member States so desire, can be innovative, realistic and pragmatic. When we do so, we can make a difference and blaze a new trail. We can make a difference with the speeches we make here and the decisions that we adopt, which must be followed by action.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Motter (Inter-Parliamentary Union): I am pleased to address the General Assembly on the second annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/63/92). Allow me at the outset to commend the Commission for its great contribution to the revival of countries emerging from conflict. Its much-needed assistance in stabilizing and strengthening governing institutions and, in so doing, enhancing their capacity to sustain peace is greatly appreciated.

I am pleased to point out that since its inception, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) have enjoyed close cooperation, especially in the context of strengthening the role and capacity of parliaments to contribute to peace processes. The IPU looks forward to pursuing that cooperation with the Commission.

It is obvious why the international community should continue to include parliaments in efforts to bring peace and stability to conflict-prone societies. Indeed, parliaments' role in articulating and mediating between the divergent interests in societies contribute in no small way to helping transform societies from conflict to sustainable peace. A key challenge for the international community is to ensure that parliaments in post-conflict societies, which, like other governing institutions, are weak or have been undermined by the conflict, are given the means to perform their functions effectively. The fact that such parliaments are often composed of the very same actors who have been party

to the conflict makes a particularly strong case for continued efforts by the international community to promote dialogue and a culture of tolerance. It is the hope of the IPU that the Commission will continue to pay particular attention to that major challenge.

The IPU, for its part, is committed to supporting parliaments in post-conflict countries. In June this year, it launched a far-reaching project that aims to strengthen the role of parliaments in English-speaking African countries in promoting inclusive political processes, institutional reform and reconciliation. Parliaments benefiting from that support include those of Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Zimbabwe will hopefully join the list.

The project brought together members of parliament from those countries at a regional seminar in Sierra Leone to discuss issues that parliaments should factor into their strategies for promoting national peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. They include transitional justice mechanisms, the establishment of appropriate reparation policies, the role of women, the controversial issue of amnesty, the pursuit of justice — including national versus international courts — security sector reform and many more. The experiences shared at the seminar highlighted the potential that parliaments have to bring people closer and that, if managed well, they can serve as an important vehicle for political mediation and action and for the equitable allocation of resources to address the needs of the population. Participants came away with the strong conviction that reconciliation was not an event but rather a healing process that affects the lives of several generations and also that perseverance was essential in the process.

Also in June of this year, the IPU, in cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission, organized a panel discussion in New York on parliaments, peacebuilding and reconciliation, which brought forth relevant experiences from Burundi, Central America and South Africa. The debate touched on a number of aspects and challenges, including the role of former combatants, the financing of political parties and the need for the international community to assist in developing a culture of shared responsibilities among minority and majority political parties. The meeting helped identify lessons learned and good practices and pinpointed practical ways to implement those good practices.

Needless to say, the IPU has been keen and pleased to proffer support to Peacebuilding Commission effort at the national level, especially in Burundi and Sierra Leone. In Burundi, the IPU has been engaged with the parliament to assist it in promoting dialogue and establishing mechanisms that promote inclusiveness in decision-making. It has also continued to provide assistance to women parliamentarians.

In Sierra Leone, at the request of the Peacebuilding Commission, the IPU carried out a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the parliament in October 2007. The challenges facing the parliament are typical ones for a post-conflict environment. The wounds of conflict have yet to be completely healed, and Sierra Leone remains a fragile and volatile society. The parliament faces the daunting task of putting the pieces of Sierra Leonean society back together. National reconciliation and transitional justice will therefore continue to be at the top of the agenda. The IPU, in cooperation with UNDP, intends to build on that assessment to identify specific interventions that will enable the parliament to come to grips with those challenges.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that a parliament is a complex institution whose potential to deliver is not always guaranteed. The challenge for the international community is therefore to take cognizance of parliament's role and complexity and to nurture its full capacity. In that regard, we are pleased that the Commission has continued to place the needs of democratically elected parliaments high on its agenda. For our part, we will continue to raise awareness of the work of the Commission among our members along the lines indicated in the report.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 10 and 101?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.